

Youth is the period of building up the habits, hopes, and faiths. Not an hour but is trembling with destinies.—JOHN RUSKIN.

Federal Interest in Juvenile Delinquency

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MANY American children grow up in a rough world. They come from homes broken by desertion, divorce, or separation, or are children of unwed mothers. These, generally, are the youngsters, deprived of a father's support, who are dependent upon the Federal-State aid to dependent children programs for the bare necessities of life. Throughout the Nation there are more than 2 million of these children.

There are many pressures. Thousands of children under 12 years of age, whose mothers work full time away from home, have no daytime afterschool supervision. There is no telling how many children live in undesirable neighborhoods with substandard housing. Every year millions of children change schools, moving from State to State, from town to town, or into different neighborhoods. Many children, of course, grow up in combinations of these unfortunate situations, these pressures.

And from their numbers come many of the disturbed children, the youngsters in conflict with the law, members of what has been called "the shookup generation."

Police currently handle more than 1.7 million cases of juvenile misbehavior a year. About a quarter of these, or 428,000, are referred to the juvenile courts by police; an additional 175,000

delinquency cases are referred to juvenile courts by parents, teachers, or social agencies, making a total of more than 600,000 delinquency court cases every year.

Their number grows. The delinquency cases handled by the juvenile courts increased by 137 percent between 1948 and 1957, whereas the child population from 10 to 17 years of age increased only 28 percent.

By 1965 there will be an estimated 30 million children in the United States in this high-risk, vulnerable age group, a third more than in 1957. If the incidence of juvenile delinquency continues to increase at the same rate as it has since 1948, then by 1965 the juvenile courts will be handling delinquent children at an annual rate of about a million cases. And by then, police will be handling a much greater number, many of which will never reach the courts.

There isn't any simple solution, as we all know. But we know, too, that juvenile delinquency has reached perilous proportions. Two things urgently need doing: first, we must arouse ourselves and our communities to get on with the job of doing those things that could and should be done now, and second, we must pursue with vigor the search for better understanding of the basic conditions which lead to this fearsome complex of social behavior.

Cooperative Efforts Needed

Successful efforts to combat juvenile delinquency require cooperation. It is a job for a number of people: the parents and relatives,

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Standard Family Court Act

Family courts would take the place of separate juvenile and domestic relations courts in model State legislation developed by the National Probation and Parole Association in cooperation with the Children's Bureau, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the National Council of Juvenile Court Judges.

The model legislation, entitled the "Standard Family Court Act," was published in April 1959, in the *Journal of the National Probation and Parole Association*, as the culmination of a 4-year project.

The need for a unified court approach to family problems has been indicated by various students of judicial procedure since early in this century. The new standard act represents a radical departure from previous model legislation by bringing together, under the jurisdiction of a single court, the major legal issues and problems of a personal nature which arise within families.

The family court, as proposed, would be set up on a statewide basis and would include a corps of specialized services within each court to treat such problems as delinquency and neglect, as well as provide special services in cases involving divorce, legal separation, support, adoptions, and certain criminal actions involving adults who commit offenses against children or other members within a family.

The new proposal, for the use and implementation by State legislatures, spells out the duties and responsibilities of the court as well as its relationship to other agencies. It sets up safeguards around the rights of parents and children in its provisions for legal counsel and in certain limitations it places on the court's procedures and disposition powers.

Specifically prohibited by the act would be transfer of a delinquent child to an institution for adult criminals; placement of a neglected child in an institution for delinquents; and subjecting a child to criminal court penalties and juvenile court control for the same offense.

The organizational pattern of the family court act would permit the establishment on a national basis of an accurate count of the number of children and families in trouble. Statewide reporting exists now in several States but not on a unified basis.

the doctor, the psychologist, the teacher, the social worker, the minister, the lawyer, and the police. And it is a job for citizens groups, voluntary organizations, and government at all levels, local, State, and Federal. The main work, of course, must be done in the communities, for troubled youngsters must be reached in person, in their homes, their churches, their schools, or on streets and back alleys, if that's where they are.

At the same time, juvenile delinquency is a matter of State and Federal concern. Because it is a highly complicated problem, many diversified approaches are required in its solution. In one way or another, it is of concern to virtually every unit of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The Children's Bureau, with responsibility for helping improve the conditions under which children are born and grow up, has a particular concern for those youngsters in conflict with society. In 1955 it established the Division of Juvenile Delinquency Services, whose staff members on request give professional consultation to juvenile courts, probation officers, police, youth commissions and councils, and citizens' organizations in cities and counties all over the country.

An important function of this unit is the development, in consultation with State and local authorities, of standards and guides for the use of professional personnel and agencies concerned with juvenile delinquency. A much-needed standard for the use of juvenile courts has been completed. In cooperation with the National Probation and Parole Association and the National Council of Juvenile Court Judges, the Children's Bureau is now working on a revision of the family and juvenile court acts.

As in the past, the Children's Bureau is the focal point in the Federal Government for initial planning of the White House Conference on Children and Youth. This historic conference, which has been called by the President of the United States in every decade in this century, will concern itself in 1960 with lasting values in the changing world. The problems of juvenile delinquency undoubtedly will have an important place in the program.

Between now and 1960, communities, States, and the Federal Government will be examining

how our changing world is affecting children. Specifically, study groups will explore such things as family, religion, and the arts. They also will look at community organizations and services as they impinge on the life of the child. In addition, they will inquire into the manner in which the behavior of adults, in their interactions with children and youth, deter or foster individual fulfillment and constructive services to humanity.

I am sure the many studies leading up to the conference will give us valuable new insights into the ultimate solution of juvenile delinquency prevention.

Prevention Main Objective

Prevention is the central objective of many other Federal activities that bear directly or indirectly on the question of juvenile delinquency. In 1956, the President called the first Conference on Fitness of American Youth, and subsequently created the President's Council on Youth Fitness and a Citizens' Advisory Committee to that council. For the past 2 years it has been my privilege to represent the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare on the Interagency Advisory Group to the Council.

The President has thus brought together many creative minds and new energies for a single purpose: to stimulate and encourage the building of men and women of physical, moral, and spiritual strength.

In the words of Homer C. Wadsworth, of Kansas City, chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee, "The Council should serve three main purposes: (a) to continue to alert the American people to the need for special emphasis on the fitness of American youth; (b) to act as a clearinghouse for information on activities proven to be especially effective in this regard; and (c) to encourage a more effective coordination of public and private services in our communities designed to promote youth fitness."

These and other related activities are bound to bring enormous benefit to our children and young people. A really heartening advance was made for children when Congress last fall amended the Social Security Act to authorize the Children's Bureau to provide welfare serv-

ices for children in urban areas on the same basis as for rural children, services that will help to keep children in their homes and strengthen family life; that protect babies who are going to be adopted; that provide good foster homes when necessary; that help children in danger of becoming delinquent. This is the first time that Federal funds have been authorized to augment and strengthen local and State public and voluntary efforts.

In 1956, Congress amended the Social Security Act to give emphasis to social services in public assistance programs that lead, importantly, to the strengthening of family life and that help stimulate city and community efforts to help families and individuals get back on their feet and to tap all sources of help for families in trouble.

By incorporating in the legislation the word "services," Congress gave a powerful incentive to the States to move in the direction of prevention of human disasters that so frequently happen when a family undergoes a social breakdown. To move in the direction of helping people off assistance rather than helping people on assistance is the goal toward which all these programs must strive.

The Family Approach

The family approach to social problems is of real significance in the treatment of juvenile delinquency. Disturbed youngsters often come from disturbed families. And when we, as a Nation, are able to do a better job of reaching these multiproblem families, we will have come a long way in helping prevent juvenile delinquency and other social ills. Among the individual members of these families will be found not only juvenile delinquency but combinations of all the other problems that confront our society today: mental illness, physical disability, alcoholism, unmarried parenthood, broken homes, prostitution, drug addiction, and many others. These are the marginal families, dependent or potentially dependent. Their children are in "clear and present danger."

It should be emphasized that multiproblem families are not confined to low-income groups. There are probably as many multiproblem

families among the self-supporting as there are among families on public assistance. Problems of a family often first show up on hospital records, when an illegitimate baby is born or a mentally ill person is identified, or on police records, when a youngster comes in conflict with the law, or even on school records, when a child is consistently truant or an academic failure.

No one, of course, knows just how many of these families there are. But from a recent analysis of 25 cities based on records of official agencies, we get a rough idea of the number of families that have undergone a social breakdown. In half the cities the rate was 67 families per 1,000. Eastern and northern cities showed a rate between 29.4 and 78.3 families per 1,000. Southern cities had a uniformly higher rate.

These families are not all in hiding. Many are known to social agencies, teachers and the clergy, and members of our profession, and they are frequently known to the police. It makes sense to bend every effort to reach a family before it becomes dependent, or failing that, to help a swamped family get back on its own feet, emotionally and financially.

And that again is what the Department is trying to foster through its new emphasis on social work in the public assistance programs. This approach is gaining momentum all the time. But the full potential of public assistance programs will be approached only when all the resources of the community, public and private, that could possibly be of help to families in trouble are brought together in an organized way to bear upon immediate problems.

Program Interrelationship

In this and other programs of the Department, we seek to destroy the seeds of social evils before they have had a chance to germinate. The programs are interwoven, interrelated.

The Office of Education, alerted to the role that schools can play in identifying and helping delinquents or potential delinquents, has contracted with a number of universities and colleges for research studies on various aspects of juvenile delinquency in its relation to education.

One of the provisions of the new National

Defense Education Act should have an extremely beneficial effect in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. This is the title that sets up a nationwide system of testing, backed up by counseling and guidance programs. It seems to me that when special talents in boys and girls are identified when they are young, and when they are encouraged to pursue these talents and make the most of themselves, there will be a good deal less risk that they will become members of street gangs or get in trouble with the law. School counselors in many cases should be able to identify potentially delinquent children and bring community resources to bear on their problems in time to prevent real trouble.

The Public Health Service is intensifying its efforts in areas of mental health, with a number of significant programs relating to juvenile delinquency. Important fundamental work was done last year by scientists of the National Institute of Mental Health toward clarifying some of the basic mechanisms of psychological development and human behavior.

It is very encouraging to note the widespread expansion of community mental health programs. A high share of the cost of these programs is being provided by State and local resources. An alltime high of \$54 million was expended, from all sources, for these purposes during the past year, but only 7.4 percent of this represents Federal funds.

Delinquency In Perspective

I think, in any discussion of juvenile delinquency, we should put statistics in perspective. Not all of our children are growing up to be troublemakers. Most parents do a good job. Churches of all denominations have a large membership among children and young people. And our schools and numerous youth-serving organizations are doing a commendable job in promoting good citizenship.

But for those children who are delinquent, or likely to become so, we have an obligation to do what we can, when and where we can, and to start doing it now!

From its earliest days, our Nation has been a symbol of freedom to the rest of the world, freedom to stretch our minds in the way they incline, freedom of opportunity. Of the

world's 2½ billion people, somehow our Nation of 175 million has managed to accumulate almost half of the world's wealth.

We have the resources and much of the know-how to end hunger and scarcity and poverty and disease, and to slash out at social evils that have beset mankind through the ages. We have the resources to encourage more intellectual attainment among more young people. In our

own generation we could bring untold benefit not only to ourselves and our children, but to future generations of all people of the world.

Surely, amidst our plenty, we can realize the sheer practicality and find the resources of time, energy, money, and creative thinking to help these thousands of boys and girls in our society whom society, in some way, has failed and whom we have tagged "delinquent."

Protection of Dairy Products

As a result of developments such as the mass production of penicillin and of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides and the widespread use of these chemicals on the farm, interstate concern with milk has multiplied. In 1949, the Department of Agriculture joined the Food and Drug Administration in advising farmers that sprays containing DDT should not be used on milk cows or in dairy barns. These uses have largely been discontinued.

We have found that when a cow eats feed that contains DDT, she excretes the pesticide in her milk. Most of the other chlorinated hydrocarbons also leave poisonous residues in milk when used on the cow or her feed.

When penicillin is infused into the cow's udder to treat mastitis, it comes out in the milk for a considerable period of time. Some farmers are using chlorinated hydrocarbons and penicillin improperly and residues of these chemicals are showing up in milk. Although the residues are very small, they cannot be tolerated.

Our limited surveys of milk conducted in 1954 and 1955 disclosed that 3 percent of the 1954 samples and more than 11 percent of the 1955 samples contained minute quantities of penicillin. A larger survey in 1956 covering the entire country showed similar penicillin residues in about 6 percent of the samples.

In our nationwide survey of market milk for pesticide residues in 1955, quantitative chemical tests on 169 samples believed to have

highest insecticide residues (based on earlier bioassay) showed 33 samples with residues ranging from 0.05 to 1.5 ppm of DDT, or its equivalent.

Remedial steps we have taken since then include the requirement that penicillin-containing drugs for treating mastitis by infusion into the cow's udder must bear a warning on the label itself that milk from treated cows should not be used as food for 72 hours after the treatment; formerly, this warning might appear only on the circular shipped with the drug. The penicillin content of mastitis treatments is now limited to 100,000 units per dose; formerly much larger amounts were being used.

A recent nationwide survey gave the following preliminary findings:

- Around 0.1 ppm of chlorinated hydrocarbons by chemical tests in about 4 percent of almost 800 market milk samples tested. The more sensitive bioassay shows a higher percentage of samples with residues.

- Penicillin residues in 3½ percent of more than 1,100 samples tested. When the positive samples were averaged, the penicillin content was approximately 0.1 unit per milliliter of milk. (These percentage figures are not strictly comparable with those obtained earlier because of some variation in sampling procedures.)

It is clear that there has been significant improvement in the milk supply. This reflects sincere, extensive efforts.

—Excerpt from a speech delivered by George P. Larrick, Commissioner of Food and Drugs, at the Dairy Products Improvement Institute in New York City, February 19, 1959.